

# AMBS alumni news

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## JIM BROWN

### PASTOR, TEACHER, STEWARDSHIP CONSULTANT

Jim Brown is in his seventh year of pastoring at Riverdale Mennonite Church in Millbank, Ont. Jim's approach to ministry has been shaped by working for Native Ministries in Manitoba, serving with Mennonite Voluntary Service in

with Mennonite Foundation of Canada for six years as a stewardship consultant across Manitoba and Saskatchewan. In 2007 the family moved to Ontario and Jim began at Riverdale.

Jim and Sharon also are alumni of Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Conrad Grebel College, and several Mennonite high schools. Their three sons are now all university students.

In his free time Jim enjoys woodturning and keeping up with former students and worldwide friends on Facebook.

In November 2014 Jim will host a Nazareth to Rome tour through Tour-Magination with Nelson Kraybill serving as tour leader.

Jim is looking forward to re-connecting more with AMBS.



Hamilton, working in a community centre in a West Indian neighbourhood in Toronto, and pastoring in several congregations.

Jim graduated from AMBS in 1994 with an MDiv in Pastoral Ministry. In 1999, after his wife, Sharon, graduated from AMBS with a MATS concentrating in Christian education, they took their sons, Jacob, Peter and David, for a two-year term of teaching Bible, theology and ministry courses at Lithuania Christian College. Jim also preached in a small congregation part-time. While there they used the opportunity as a family to explore Lithuania, Latvia and St. Petersburg, Russia.

Upon returning to Canada, Jim experienced the intersection of faith, money and the business world as he served

### AFFIRM JIM'S NOMINATION

To affirm Jim Brown as a member at large on the Alumni Association Executive Committee, please return the enclosed card or send a message to Bob Rosa, [brosa@ambs.edu](mailto:brosa@ambs.edu) •

## A GIFT FOR ENCOURAGERS

Shoulder-tapping (featured with two stories on page 2) continues to be one of the most effective ways of helping people hear God's call to ministry.

To support in this ministry of calling new pastors, AMBS offers a gift credit of \$25 at the Mennonite Cooperative Bookstore if you encourage someone to attend AMBS and that person completes an admissions application. You will need to let us know whom you are encouraging, or that person will need to tell us so that we can set up the credit account for you at the bookstore. For more information, contact [admissions@ambs.edu](mailto:admissions@ambs.edu) •

The past and the future of AMBS come together in many of the articles in this issue of *Alumni News*. We are invited to reminisce or learn for the first time about Partly Dave, a coffee house in Elkhart. This ministry was begun by a seminary class and carried out by students and volunteers from churches in the area. If you are in the Elkhart area in the next year, plan to enjoy the reports and the 1960s photos in the exhibit at the historical museum in Bristol, Ind.

Past and future come together in several news articles. As nominee for the alumni executive committee, Jim Brown brings his experience as a student and a graduate to the task of guiding alumni relations. Likewise, the work of the "Practicing Reconciliation" blog shares efforts that may contribute to the healing of past hurts that bring about a new future for victims.

Five alumni (two in this issue and three in the previous issue) have shared their stories of encouragement to come to seminary. In each story, others recognized and named to them their gifts for ministry. The encouragement we alumni give to potential students is perhaps the most important gift we can offer to AMBS. •

— Rhoda Schrag,  
Alumni Association president



## AFFIRMATION OF GIFTS LEADS TO MINISTRY

### Lois Siemens, MDiv 2006

The first time a friend suggested I go to seminary was right after a worship service I had planned. That is NOT what I wanted to hear. I wanted to hear how amazing the service was. I laughed it off.

This was not an isolated incident. For the next six months or so, every time I led worship, a friend or two would approach me, give me high praise and tell me I should go to seminary. Seminary was not on my radar. And I wondered, "What can they see, that I can't?"

One day at work I looked around me and asked myself, "Is this where I want to be when I'm fifty?" I decided no and enrolled in evening classes at the local college. I still could not imagine giving up my life to go to seminary just to learn how to lead worship.

Then one Sunday I went to another church in the city and someone got up and explained her sabbatical plans which included a semester at seminary.

"That's it!" I said to myself. I can go for a semester and get everything I need to be a better worship leader. So I made arrangements and went for a semester.

At lunch one day, the campus pastor said, "You know, Lois, your skills are bigger than leading worship." Here's the thing: strangers at seminary were saying the same things my friends were. It was time to sit up and listen.

*Lois Siemens, MDiv 2006, is a bivocational pastor and artist. The congregation she serves is Superb Mennonite Church, Kerrobert, Sask.*

### Matt Hickman, MDiv 2008

I began my undergraduate studies at Goshen College having only joined a Mennonite congregation two years prior. I grew up and came to faith in a Southern Baptist congregation and it took quite a bit of adjustment to navigate the waters of Mennodom. Nurture and encouragement of my personal gifts and traits that could lend themselves to pastoral ministry happened in both congregations, but in the turmoil of young-adulthood I benefited from persistent affirmation by Sylvia Shirk, who was Goshen College campus minister at the time. The notion of women in pastoral ministry was still new to me, but Sylvia's character and ministry quickly persuaded me. I count her influence and friendship as a significant marker on my path to pastoral ministry.

During this same period, I was introduced by Sylvia to then-AMBS-student Rachel Miller Jacobs who was offering spiritual direction to Goshen College students. Rachel introduced me to what were, for me, novel ways of praying, engaging scripture and discerning God's work in and around me. I count Rachel as a dear friend and, now in my pastoral ministry, as a colleague.

My undergraduate years were nothing less than a cross-cultural experience! I am grateful that these two ministers of Christ were there as guides.

*Matt Hickman, MDiv 2008, is associate pastor of Mennonite Church of Normal, Normal, Ill. •*

## KEEP IN TOUCH WITH AMBS

Follow AMBS on Facebook:  
[www.facebook.com/followAMBS](http://www.facebook.com/followAMBS)  
(Click "Like" next to our name so you can get regular updates.)

Subscribe to the AMBS calendar to get notices of new events:  
[www.ambs.edu/news-events/calendar/10147](http://www.ambs.edu/news-events/calendar/10147)

Download guest lectures on iTunes U:  
[www.ambs.edu/news-events/iTunesU.cfm](http://www.ambs.edu/news-events/iTunesU.cfm)

## AMBS NOTES

### Partly Dave remembered

Partly Dave, a coffee house that grew out of a seminary class taught by Leland Harder, functioned from 1966 to 1975, but its influence was far-reaching, according to those who gathered for a reunion in Elkhart from May 31 to June 2.

**John Kampen, Lauren Friesen, Ardean Goertzen, Grace Mishler, Dave Schmidt** and many others who were involved with Partly Dave participated, and news reports are available at [www.etruth.com](http://www.etruth.com).

Mennonite Church USA and the Elkhart County Historical Society prepared a Partly Dave exhibit that continues until September 2014 at the Elkhart County Historical Museum: [www.elkhartcountyhistory.org/exhibits/](http://www.elkhartcountyhistory.org/exhibits/)

### Addressing issues related to John Howard Yoder

Sara Wenger Shenk, AMBS president, has helped to form a discernment group to guide a process with the intent of contributing to healing for victims of abuse by John Howard Yoder, (former faculty and president of Goshen Biblical Seminary) and healing for others hurt by his behavior.

Read Sara's blog for her reflections on the questions and discussions "we must have in order to grow in maturity as a people of faith. As an educator, I recognize this as a profoundly teachable moment in our church—and for that I am hopeful!"

Read Practicing Reconciliation posts at [www.ambs.edu/publishing/blog/10153](http://www.ambs.edu/publishing/blog/10153).

*Additional news notes on page 4.*

## ALUMNI NEWS NOTES

Several alumni have accepted positions at Oaklawn, a psychiatric hospital and mental health center:

- **Andrea Opel (MDiv 2012)**, social worker with Elkhart County Child and Adolescent Clinical Services.
- **Rolando Sosa Granados (MDiv 2010)**, social worker with child and adolescent clinical services in Elkhart.
- **Joseph Vallejos (MAPS 2010)**, social worker with addictions services in South Bend.

**Laura Brenneman (MATS 2001 and sessional faculty)** was licensed for chaplaincy Aug. 25 at First Mennonite Church of Urbana, Illinois. She has begun a CPE chaplaincy internship at BroMenn Healthcare in Bloomington-Normal, Illinois.

**Brianne Donaldson (MATS 2007)** is the first professor and director of the Center for Jain Studies at Claremont (Calif.) Lincoln University.

**Amy Nissley Stauffer (MACF 2004)** is associate pastor of congregational life, Hesston (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

**Jake Hess (MAPS 2013)** is serving as co-coordinator and caseworker in the Community Service Restitution Program with the Center for Community Justice in Elkhart.

### ORDINATIONS

**Sandy Miller (MDiv 2012)** was ordained Aug. 18 at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, for her ministry as director for church relations at Mennonite Mission Network.

**Sherri Martin-Carman (MDiv 1998)** was ordained Oct. 27 at the Floradale Mennonite Church in Ontario for ministry as a retirement home chaplain.

### BIRTHS

Maeve Norma to **Wes Goertzen (MDiv 2013)** and Heather on Aug. 10.

Bailey to **Carole Ricketts-Corey (MDiv 2001)** and her husband, Matthew, on June 25.

Levi Daniel to **Alan Stucky (MDiv 2009)** and Katie Best on June 26.

Jonah Eugene to **Samuel Voth Schrag (MDiv 2007)** and Rachel on July 11.

Elijah William to **Jessica Bigler Uhl (MAPS 2007)** and Matt on June 22.

Annelise Leah to **Melissa Fisher Fast (MDiv 2006)** and David on May 3.

Atticus Owen to **Jason Vance (MDiv 2010)** and Rhonda on May 26.

### DEATHS

**J. Herbert Fretz**, died Aug. 10, 2013, in Goshen. Herb served as Coordinator of Church and Seminary Relations at AMBS from 1968 to 1988. He worked with the community school

corporation in Wadsworth, Ohio, to have the bell from the first Mennonite institution of higher learning donated to AMBS a few years ago.

**Gerald Studer (MDiv 1971)** died Aug. 1, 2013, in Pennsylvania. He served as pastor of several congregations, as conference minister and overseer in two Mennonite regional conferences, and in many other conference and church-wide roles. For decades he collected Bibles, including rare editions, versions in many different languages and contemporary versions. He donated the collection to AMBS.

**Harold Miller (MDiv 1978)** died June 3 in Goshen, Ind. He was pastor of a congregation in Kansas and worked as a carpenter. ●

## GETTING ACQUAINTED



Vada Snider



Mary E. Klassen

The school year began with get-acquainted activities for both Kansas and campus students. At left, Ron Moyo, AMBS-Great Plains and online student, and Lois Friesen, AMBS-Great Plains student, participated in an evening meal and information session hosted by interim director Dorothy Nickel Friesen. Above, participants in the annual retreat at Camp Friedenswald work to untie a human knot: (clockwise from left) Rachel Miller Jacobs, Naomi Tice, Brent Siegrist, Laurel Mast, Peter Martin and Osée Tshiwapé.



# APPLY NOW TO COMPLETE YOUR AMBS DEGREE

If you have taken classes at AMBS but did not complete a degree, you must act now if you wish to rely on the credits you have already earned.

Due to changes in the field of higher education, AMBS can honor only those credits earned in the last ten years. However, if you have older credits and **apply by January 1** to continue study, all old credits that fit current plans of study may be counted.

This is your opportunity to build on earlier study and get the benefit of new AMBS programs. The first step in returning to study at AMBS is to complete the application for admission—including supporting documents and payment of fees—by January 1.

If you have any questions, please contact the Admissions team: **admissions@ambs.edu**. They will tell you about new degree programs and what steps to take to re-enter our learning community. ●

## A M B S NOTES

### United Methodist approval

AMBS is now approved to offer the 80-credit-hour MDiv Campus program to United Methodist students. Encourage those interested to contact **admissions@ambs.edu**

### President reappointed

Sara Wenger Shenk, AMBS president, has been reappointed for another four-year term, 2014–18. This action began with the AMBS board of directors and included actions from Mennonite Church Canada Christian Formation Council and Mennonite Education Agency of Mennonite Church USA.

### Anabaptist Short Courses

Six-week online courses on congregational conflict and Mennonite polity are scheduled for spring. In addition, a Spanish-language course on Anabaptist history and theology—also six-weeks online—is offered in February and March. Visit **www.ambs.edu/anabaptistshortcourses**

### Pastors Week features 5 faculty

“Help me see Jesus! Help me see, Jesus!” is the theme of **Pastors Week, Jan. 27–30**. Five AMBS professors will focus on Jesus from different points of view:

- Rachel Miller Jacobs, D.Min.;
- Andy Brubacher Kaethler, Ph.D.;
- Safwat Marzouk, Ph.D.;
- Jamie Pitts, Ph.D.;
- Allan Rudy Froese, Ph.D.

Read more about Pastors Week and January 27 Leadership Clinics at **www.ambs.edu/pastorsweek**

### Spring online course

**Social Theory for Christian Peacemakers** will be taught online during spring semester. Instructor Gerald Shenk hopes students from many different settings will bring life experience into conversation with the theological convictions and social theory constructs: **www.ambs.edu/academics/social-theory-for-Christian-peacemakers-course.cfm** ●



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Mary E. Klassen

**Adolfo (former student) and Betty (MDiv 1985) Puricelli are the volunteer coordinators this year at AMBS. They were in ministry at the Mennonite New Life Center in Toronto from 1983 until August 2013.**

## INVITATION TO VOLUNTEER

Volunteers are invaluable to AMBS, contributing to maintenance of the campus, office tasks, and much more.

During Pastors Week especially, AMBS relies on volunteers. Adolfo and Betty Puricelli, volunteer coordinators, extend a call for help with preparations through the month of January and hosting during the intense week—and managing snow and ice as needed!

If you can assist or know someone who could join the seminary community in January, please contact Adolfo and Betty: **volunteercoordinator@ambs.edu** or 574.296.6234.

Assistance at any time is welcome. Help spread the word about this opportunity. ●



A seminary of  
Mennonite Church USA and  
Mennonite Church Canada